

SMITH, RUSSELL ALAN, D.M.A. Gil Askey's (1925-2014) Horn Arrangements for the Four Tops and the Temptations: A Lecture Recital. (2016)  
Directed by Prof. Timothy M. Clodfelter. 31 pp.

1. Solo Recital: Wednesday, April 23rd, 2014, 7:30 P.M., Recital Hall, UNCG.

*Caprice* (Joseph Turrin); *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* (Eric Ewazen);  
*Concerto in C* (Antonio Vivaldi); *Quatre Variations sur un Theme de  
Domenico Scarlatti* (Marcel Bitsch); *All The Way* (James Van Heusen)

2. Solo Recital: Sunday, February 15th, 2015, 5:30 P.M., Recital Hall, UNCG.

*Strap On Your Lobster* (James Mobberley); *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano*  
(Kent Kennan); *Fandango* (Joseph Turrin); *Songs of a Wayfarer* (Gustav  
Mahler); *Nocturno* (Franz Strauss); *The Preacher* (Horace Silver)

3. Solo Recital: Wednesday, April 6th, 2016, 7:30 P.M., Organ Hall, UNCG.

*Postcards* (Anthony Plog); *Caprice* (Eugen Bozza); *Oblivion* (Astor  
Piazzolla); *The Rose Variations* (Robert Russell Bennett); *Concerto for  
Trumpet* (Johann Neruda); *Elegy* (George Thalben-Ball)

4. D.M.A. Research Project. GIL ASKEY'S (1925-2014) HORN  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FOUR TOPS AND THE TEMPTATIONS: A  
LECTURE RECITAL. This document accompanies a lecture recital that  
provided background biographical information and suggested techniques for  
performing the horn section arrangements of the Four Tops and the  
Temptations in a live setting. Introductory information about the scope and  
significance of the project and background biographical information about  
Motown Records Company and arranger Gil Askey were discussed. The

logistical and performance challenges that must be addressed when executing these horn arrangements were explored as well. An examination of the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic elements contained in the horn section arrangements was presented along with stylistic performance considerations. Excerpts taken from the actual horn section parts used in the live stage shows were included and analyzed, presented in a PowerPoint presentation and accompanied by a live, 10-piece horn section.

The document is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 is comprised of an introductory overview of the study and discusses the relevance of the subject matter. The second chapter deals with background biographical information on arranger Gil Askey and his involvement with Motown Record Company's roster of artists. Chapter 3 discusses the demands placed on musicians engaged to play with the Four Tops and Temptations. The fourth chapter explores common performance practices of the horn section arrangements for these groups and Chapter 5 concludes and summarizes the findings of the project and offers suggestions for further research.

GIL ASKEY'S (1925-2014) HORN ARRANGEMENTS  
FOR THE FOUR TOPS AND THE TEMPTATIONS:  
A LECTURE RECITAL

by

Russell Alan Smith

A Dissertation Submitted to  
the Faculty of The Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Musical Arts

Greensboro  
2016

Approved by

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Committee Chair

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*Lovingly dedicated to  
my father Clayton Smith and my cousin David Smith.*

## APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Russell Alan Smith has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Duke Fakir, Mckinley Jackson and Turhan Van Dyke, your kindness and hospitality during my visit to Detroit along with your candor and generosity were very much appreciated. It has always been a pleasure to play for you and I look forward to many more performances together. I would also like to thank my good friend Bob Farrell, formerly of the Temptations, for sharing the charts for his beautiful overture. To Ray Alexander, I will never forget that it was you who first took a chance on putting me in your horn section to work with these wonderful artists. To Scott Adair, you are my brother and I can't thank you enough for continuing to call me to do this work. To the members of the Carolina Horns, it is always a treat to be on the road with you guys.

I had originally hoped to travel to Australia to spend time with Gil Askey but was unable to make the trip before his passing. The time I was able to spend with him in Las Vegas was priceless and will stay with me forever. To Hellen Askey, thank you for your correspondence and your generosity. To saxophonist Paul Williamson, thanks for your words of wisdom and encouragement. Also, I would be remiss if I did not say a special word of thanks to guitarist Geoff Achison who connected me with these fine folks from the land down under.

This project would not have been possible without the support and guidance of my doctoral committee members: Mr. Mark Clodfelter, Dr. Randy Kholenberg, Dr. Dennis Askew and Mr. Brandon Lee. In addition, I would like to thank Cat Keen Hock for keeping me on track with regard to deadlines, forms and signatures. Thank you so much Tim Morgan, Alex Fisher, Diane Reyes, David Vance, Michael Mattocks, Dan

Hitchcock, Emily Loboda, John Jepsen, Ariel Kopeland, and Melvin Holland for your wonderful work in the horn section on my lecture recital and at the rehearsal the evening before. Any horn section contractor would be lucky to have great players such as you all to share the stage.

Finally, to the two lovely ladies in my life, my mother Mrs. Norma Smith and my fiancée Ms. Laura Jenkins, you have supported me through this entire process in more ways than I can put into words. I love you both with all of my heart.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY: WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

The Four Tops and the Temptations are among the most recognizable and well-loved vocal groups in the history of popular music. Commonly referred to as the Tops and the Tempts, these artists continue to appear regularly in performance venues around the globe, as they have done for more than five decades.

The stage show for these artists consists of a high-energy presentation of the best selling musical compositions from the vocal ensembles' catalogs. The traveling entourage for each act is made up of a road manager, dresser, sound engineer, lighting director and a five-piece rhythm section, consisting of an electric guitarist, an electric bassist, a drummer and two keyboardists. One of the keyboard players serves as the musical director. In addition, for almost every performance, the contract for each group specifies that the local promoter must retain the services of a 10-piece horn section including three trumpeters, two trombonists, and five saxophonists. A musical contractor is called upon to assemble these musicians for the concert date or, if possible, for a short string of shows across a larger geographical area.

The musical arrangements provided to these horn players by the Tops and Tempts contain motivic material originally conceived by the legendary trumpeter and arranger Gil Askey, a trusted member of the production team at Motown Record

Company. His contributions to the live staging of the groups he worked with cannot be overestimated, because he oversaw every aspect of these artists' live stage productions.

The purpose of this project has been to examine the horn arrangements used in live shows for the Four Tops and the Temptations and their common performance practices. Copies of these parts were obtained from the musical directors for both artists. Excerpts were selected and organized into scores with the existing phrasing and articulation markings included. These aspects are discussed later in this document following a brief background history of these groups. In addition, a discussion of the technical and logistical challenges that must be met by the musicians engaged to perform with these groups is included. Finally, a summary of the project, conclusions reached and suggestions for further study concludes the document.

## CHAPTER II

### GIL ASKEY AND MOTOWN: THE MAN BEHIND THE MUSIC

Motown Records, “the most successful independent record company and the most successful black-owned business in American history,”<sup>1</sup> was founded by Berry Gordy, Jr. (b. 1929) in April of 1960 in Detroit, Michigan. The company featured many of the most popular recording artists of all time. Smokey Robinson, the Supremes, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, the Jackson 5, the Temptations, and the Four Tops were among the most prominent stars on the label’s roster. A small, white frame house at 2648 West Grand Boulevard became known as “Hitsville U.S.A.” and was the center of operations for Gordy’s empire. This location housed offices, rehearsal spaces, and the recording studio where countless hit songs were recorded. A large staff of musicians commonly referred to as the Funk Brothers was on call around the clock as recording sessions were scheduled for all hours of the day and night. An artist development department, in charge of molding young, unpolished singers, many of whom came from the inner city, into poised and elegant pop stars, was also established.<sup>2</sup> Motown, instrumental in breaking down racial boundaries in the music business, paved the way for black artists to be heard on radio stations that had previously broadcast only white artists. The music of “The Sound of Young America,” the trademark slogan of the company, was comprised of a blend of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://newrepublic.com/article/90960/one-nation-under-groove>

<sup>2</sup> <http://classic.motown.com/history/>

distinctively passionate singers, the call and response vocal arrangements of the African-American church tradition, pop music sensibilities, jazz virtuosity and irresistible rhythms, overlaying them with timeless songwriting.<sup>3</sup>

The Four Tops' career began when four teenagers from Detroit, Michigan, assembled to perform for a local high school graduation party in 1954. Levi Stubbs (1936-2008), Lawrence Payton (1938-1997), Renaldo "Obie" Benson (1936-2005), and Abdul "Duke" Fakir (b. 1935) were originally known as the Four Aims but changed the name to avoid confusion with the Ames Brothers, another popular African-American vocal group of the day. The Tops did not undergo a change in personnel for more than forty years. They originally signed with the Chess label and developed a polished stage presence, performing with jazz artists Billy Eckstein, Count Basie and others.<sup>4</sup>

Although they were signed to numerous record labels throughout the 1950s, the Tops' recorded no commercially successful hits during that decade. They were, however, a successful nightclub act. While performing at the Apollo Theater in New York City under the direction of house bandleader Reuben Phillips, the singers realized that their accompanying musical arrangements were not as polished as their vocal arrangements. Phillips suggested they contact an acquaintance of his in Atlantic City, Gil Askey.<sup>5</sup>

Trumpeter Gil Askey was born in Austin, Texas, on March 9, 1925. His widow Hellen Askey from Melbourne, Australia, provided the following information regarding his early years:

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<sup>3</sup> <http://classic.motown.com/history/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.bluesandsoul.com/feature/357/the\\_four\\_tops\\_bands\\_classic\\_interview\\_](http://www.bluesandsoul.com/feature/357/the_four_tops_bands_classic_interview_)

<sup>5</sup> Author's interview with Abdul Fakir on June 23, 2015.

Gil attended Olive Street Primary School and Anderson High School where he completed two years of pre-med by the age of 16. His bandleader Mr. B. L. Joyce was a lifelong role model. He later moved to Plainfield, New Jersey, where he cleaned Pullman cars, but played his horn at every opportunity. On joining the army he was a stenographer, cooked, and played in the Army band.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to Askey's assigned duties while serving in the Army in Wichita Falls, Texas, he also played with the base Special Services Band. There he began composing and arranging. After Askey's time in the service, he began musical study at the Boston Conservatory of Music and later at the Harnett National Music Studios in New York City.<sup>7</sup>

In New York, Askey performed with many great jazz artists including Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Billie Holiday, and Coleman Hawkins. When the Four Tops arrived in Atlantic City in search of an arranger, Askey was performing at the Harlem Club with a group led by drummer Chris Colombo. According to Melbourn, Australia, saxophonist Paul Williamson, "They would blow any band off the stage with their big 'small combo' sound (2 horns, guitar, organ and drums)."<sup>8</sup> The Tops introduced themselves to Askey, and then, according to Duke Fakir:

We went over to the Harlem Club where we heard Gil was playing and we listened to his combo and it was good. So we met Gil, all four of us. He said, "Man, I heard a lot about you guys. I heard y'all can sing that good shit, that [scats]" . . . We said well, we got a gig in Brooklyn at the Club Elegant with Frieda Payne and Reuben Phillips told us to call you. We were singing a lot of jazz. Let's just say, we were singing songs from the American Songbook the way we enjoyed singing them . . . singing like the Four Freshmen . . . We copied ourselves kinda after them, the Four Aces, you know. . . When Gil heard us

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<sup>6</sup> Email correspondence with Hellen Askey on August 11, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.michaelcorcoran.net/archives/158>

<sup>8</sup> Email correspondence from Paul Williamson on May 21, 2015.

actually singing he said “Aw man! You guys can sing! Man, you guys can sing!” He said, “Aw man, I can write y’all some good stuff.” And he says, “What’ll want written?” I said, well, you know, we’ve got a show we’ve got to put together for this Club Elegánt. I said it’s a supper club really. He said, “Y’all wanna do R&B, you wanna do the kinda things you’re doing now?” I said I think we need to do the kinda things we’re doing. He says, “Do you know ‘What Kind Of Fool Am I’?” I said yeah, we kinda knocked around with it. He said, “You probably could do the hell outta that.”<sup>9</sup>

The Tops hired Askey immediately, and he began to work arranging for the young singing group. Their show mainly consisted of an original opening number penned by Fakir entitled, *We’re The Tops*. Other selections included standard selections from the Great American Songbook in four-part harmony, and the show ended with a rhythm and blues number.<sup>10</sup>

In 1963 the Tops were finally signed to Motown Records. Their experience touring the supper club circuit and backing up major jazz artists appealed to Motown president Berry Gordy, who said, “Smooth, classy and polished, they were big stuff. I wanted them bad.”<sup>11</sup> He set out to produce an album of standards featuring the quartet backed by a big band. Fakir suggested that they hire Gil Askey to arrange and conduct the recording sessions.

So Gill Came to Detroit. We did this wonderful album. We did about 22 songs with big band, rhythm section and a couple of things almost acapella. And Gil was really a main part of helping us get that together. It’s the first time Motown had recorded stuff like that and we were all in one room, you know.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Author’s interview with Abdul Fakir on June 23, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Gordy, Berry. *To Be Loved: The Music, the Magic, the Memories of Motown*. New York, New York. 1994. p. 149

<sup>12</sup> Fakir.



Once Askey was established in Detroit, Motown made use of his arranging and conducting talents with artists including Smoky Robinson, the Temptations, Michael Jackson and the Jackson 5, Martha and the Vandellas, and Diana Ross and the Supremes. He was also asked to consider becoming a part of the legendary Motown artist development staff alongside fellow arranger and conductor Maurice King, choreographer Cholly Adkins, and finishing school teacher Maxine Powell.<sup>13</sup> Berry Gordy said about Askey, “Gil was indispensable both on and off stage. He not only wrote the Supremes’ arrangements but was [also] the glue that held their entire show together.”<sup>14</sup>

Askey was more than an arranger. At times served as the opening act for the main attraction. Fakir recalled,

He would open the show with a joke or two. You ever hear any of his jokes? Now, this is the general public, not a closed area. So, he played a little intro. “I’m Gil Askey. I’ve got a couple of stories to tell, a couple of jokes for you guys” . . . And they cracked up! I just couldn’t believe the first time I heard it. I said, Levi, did you hear that? He said, yeah! Is he crazy?! He said, they’re gonna throw us outta here. But the audience was just laughing. We got on stage and they were wide open for us.<sup>15</sup>

Eventually, Askey was established as one of the primary people Gordy trusted to put together Motown’s live presentations. Askey’s horn section writing added a greater dimension of excitement to the stage production. The classic recordings of the label’s best-selling groups many times feature the singers accompanied only by a rhythm

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<sup>13</sup> <http://teachrock.org/lesson/assembling-hits-at-motown/>

<sup>14</sup> Gordy. p. 210

<sup>15</sup> Fakir.

section, string section, and perhaps a small group of horn players. For live performances, according to Fakir:

When you do it live you need that pop. It's true. Motown didn't believe in a lot of horns sounding out. They might've recorded them but they would mix them down or push them back. They just needed horns in a few places. They didn't believe, record-wise, in the kind of feeling that we had for on stage.<sup>16</sup>

Askey brought the live shows to life and was entrusted to assemble major stage productions such as 1982's *Motown 25*, the label's star-studded 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary television special. On this show the "battle"<sup>17</sup> of the Four Tops versus the Temptations was first established. This concept later became the centerpiece of the Tempts' and Tops' joint shows known as TNT, still in demand to this day. When Berry Gordy expanded his company's reach into motion pictures, Askey was hired to arrange the music for Diana Ross' film debut *Lady Sings the Blues*. His contribution to the score of this film earned him an Academy Award nomination for musical adaptation and original song score in 1973.<sup>18</sup>

Askey served as the musical director for many Motown artists. His duties in this role included conceptualizing the stage show, writing arrangements, teaching vocals to the artists, hiring touring rhythm sections, and rehearsing local horn sections. Typically a nine to ten piece horn section consisting of three trumpets, two trombones, and four or

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<sup>16</sup> Fakir.

<sup>17</sup> In *Motown 25* the Tops and the Tempts performed together onstage in a mock singing battle featuring a medley of the artists' greatest hits.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.oscars.org/oscars/ceremonies/1973>

five saxophones was hired for each show.<sup>19</sup> Regional horn sections in many parts of the country traveled to back the artists and would many times play a number of shows in a row, following the stars' entourage from town to town on small tours. Los Angeles area musician, Horace Tapscott (1934-1999), played piano for many of the Motown artists' shows on the West Coast in the late 1960s and recalled about Askey:

Gil Askey was the main cat who made Motown. Those sounds you hear behind the Supremes, Marvin Gaye, the Four Tops, all those people, were Gil's. He was the writer who made all those kids sound good and he showed me how to write for a vocalist. Gil also made new dances and new beats that he never got credit for. The music was just flowing out of this cat. He was the cat and my man never got any notice for it.<sup>20</sup>

In the 1960s and 1970s, the peak of Motown's popularity, saxophonist Preston Love, formerly of the Count Basie Orchestra, assembled the West Coast Motown Band for shows and tours. The Ray Alexander Orchestra provided horn players for dates throughout the eastern part of the US as well as in Las Vegas and on international tours in the 1990s. Musicians throughout the United States continue to play this music in the horn sections of the Carolina Horns led by Greensboro, North Carolina, saxophonist Scott Adair and the Tuscaloosa Horns led by Tuscaloosa, Alabama, trumpeter Mart Avant. In Detroit, Michigan, trumpeter Kenneth Robinson has assembled horn sections on a regular basis, as does Orlando, Florida, trumpeter Craig Turley.

In addition to Askey, several individuals have served in the role of musical director for the Tops and Tempts, many making slight adjustments to the arrangements

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<sup>19</sup> Author's interview with McKinley Jackson on June 25, 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Tapscott, Horace. *Songs of the Unsung: The Musical and Social Journey of Horace Tapscott*. Durham, North Carolina. 2001. p. 129.

but retaining the signature motivic material originally conceived by Askey. Funk Brothers keyboardist Earl Van Dyke, Thomas “Beans” Bowles, Marcus Wade, George “Tree” Rountree, and current musical director Turhan Van Dyke (son of Earl Van Dyke) all have held the musical director position for the Tops.<sup>21</sup> Over the course of their career the Temptations have employed the services of many musical directors, including Askey, Maurice King, Bob Farrell, Al McKenzie, Peter Radd and, most recently, McKinley Jackson, former producer and musical director for Marvin Gaye.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Fakir.

<sup>22</sup> Author’s interview with McKinley Jackson on June 25, 2015.

## CHAPTER III

### LIVE PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS: GETTING THERE AND DOING IT

A Four Tops or Temptations show can be a daunting task for a first time member of the horn section. This is doubly true if the engagement involves both acts, heretofore, known as a TNT show. When Gil Askey originally conceived of the battle to be staged by the two groups opening each performance and transitioning between acts, he obviously wasn't concerned with hiring amateur horn players. Unfortunately, in many instances, due to low production budgets or remote locations, less than stellar horn sections sometimes have been assembled. Fortunately, for the sake of endurance as far as horn players are concerned, this show concept without intermission is rarely used any more.

A typical show for either the Four Tops or the Temptations runs about 75 minutes in length. When both groups are on the bill, the amount of stage time is doubled, with a 10 to 15 minute break between acts. In addition to this amount of playing usually an afternoon rehearsal in a location off stage is followed by an on-stage sound check. A separate rehearsal and sound check is scheduled for each group. A musician's total playing time can total up to more than 5 hours when the Tops and Tempts are appearing together. According to Scott Adair, leader of the Carolina Horns,

Stamina is important in these Motown shows because the shows are hard blowing and lots of it. It is particularly tougher for the brass players. It's up to the

individual to know how to pace himself and to have some help by swapping some parts or “spotting” here and there.<sup>23</sup>

Figure 1 below is an example of a common set list for each act.

Figure 1. Four Tops and Temptations – Set Lists

- |     | The Four Tops   |
|-----|---|
| 1.  | OVERTURE  |
| 2.  | LOVIN' YOU (IS SWEETER THAN EVER)                             |
| 3.  | BABY I NEED YOUR LOVING                                       |
| 4.  | BERNADETTE MEDLEY 1 (BERNADETTE)                              |
| 5.  | BERNADETTE MEDLEY 2 (IT'S THE SAME OLD SONG)                  |
| 6.  | BERNADETTE MEDLEY 3 (DON'T WALK AWAY RENEE)                   |
| 7.  | SHAKE ME WAKE ME  |
| 8.  | STILL WATER   |
| 9.  | KEEPER OF THE CASTLE  |
| 10. | IN THE STILL OF THE NIGHT                                     |
| 11. | ASK THE LONELY  |
| 12. | DANCE WITH MY FATHER (Alto 1 only)                            |
| 13. | WHAT'S GOING ON   |
| 14. | OUR WAY   |
| 15. | WHEN SHE WAS MY GIRL  |
| 16. | AIN'T NO WOMAN LIKE THE ONE I'VE GOT                          |
| 17. | REACH OUT MEDLEY (REACH OUT, STANDING IN THE SHADOWS OF LOVE) |
| 18. | CATFISH (false exit – 2X)                                     |
| 19. | CAN'T HELP MYSELF   |
| 20. | CATFISH (finale – vamp/tag)                                   |
- 
- |     | The Temptations   |
|-----|---|
| 1.  | MR. B'S INTRO   |
| 2.  | TEMPTATIONS INTRO   |
| 3.  | GET READY   |
| 4.  | WHY YOU WANNA MAKE ME BLUE  |
| 5.  | THE GIRL'S ALRIGHT WITH ME  |
| 6.  | LADY SOUL   |
| 7.  | TEMPTATIONS OPENING MEDLEY (The Way You Do The Things You Do, Ain't Too Proud To Beg, Ball Of Confusion, I Wish It Would Rain, Just My Imagination, Papa Was A Rolling Stone) |
| 8.  | CAN'T GET NEXT TO YOU   |
| 9.  | TO BE LOVED   |
| 10. | OTIS INTRO  |
| 11. | STAY  |
| 12. | TREAT HER LIKE A LADY   |
| 13. | MY GIRL   |
| 14. | I'M LOSING YOU  |

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<sup>23</sup> Email correspondence from Scott Adair on December 11, 2015.

The fact that each act's performance is comprised of such a large number of songs is an illustration that a good deal of endurance is required.

An engagement with the Tops or Temps is typically an all day affair, if not multiple days. Local appearances occur infrequently and therefore, travel to the show can take the better part of a day or more depending on the size of the region the horn section covers. Once at the performance venue and if time, players must quickly warm up and prepare for the horn section rehearsal. Usually, this takes place in a dressing room or other area away from the stage while the technical crew sets the staging, lighting, public address system, microphones, instruments and amplifiers. Chairs and stands are provided, and the musical director guides the horn section through the arrangements, keeping time with a cowbell or woodblock.

Deciphering the markings on the musical charts can be a challenge and must be addressed in the horn section rehearsal. The musical directors for each group frequently edit their arrangements, and ask horn players to make their own notations in pencil. This leads to inconsistencies from part to part in terms of pitch, rhythm, articulation, and various types of musical shorthand. Musical "road maps", that guide the performer through the sheet music, are often quite complicated and include various repeated sections, cuts or omitted passages, and unconventional *da capo*, *dal segno* and coda markings. Many passages have been marked, erased, and re-marked so many times that, without prior experience playing the show, the arranger's intentions are almost impossible to ascertain.

When Askey was the musical director for the Tops and Tempts, his rehearsals were memorable. He was very demanding of his musicians both physically and musically, pushing the section, especially trumpet players, to their limits<sup>24</sup>. Horn players were expected to be able to match Askey's vocalizations of his music. In many instances, the written articulations and even pitches were written incorrectly. Musicians were required to make corrections quickly and efficiently. Askey demanded precise, clean ensemble playing and strict adherence to the arrangements. If a trumpet player attempted to play a passage up an octave, which almost always was a very bad idea, Askey would remark, "Good! Play the whole show up the octave!"<sup>25</sup> He was very serious about the stage production and conveyed that to his musicians.

All of that being noted, Askey's personality and fun-loving nature emerged at some point. His stories and anecdotes were legendary as was his trumpet playing. Askey often brought his horn along to the performances, improvising and supplementing the ensemble parts. An important part of the show was and continues to be for the horn section to be actively engaged in the entertainment portion of the production. The musicians were expected to appear to be having fun backing up the stars, even when they were struggling just to play their parts correctly.

Once the section rehearsals are finished, the horn players join the rhythm section onstage for sound check. The rhythm sections for the Tops and Tempts each consist of a musical director who also plays keyboards, an additional keyboardist, one electric guitarist, one electric bassist, and a drummer. The Four Tops also employ the services of

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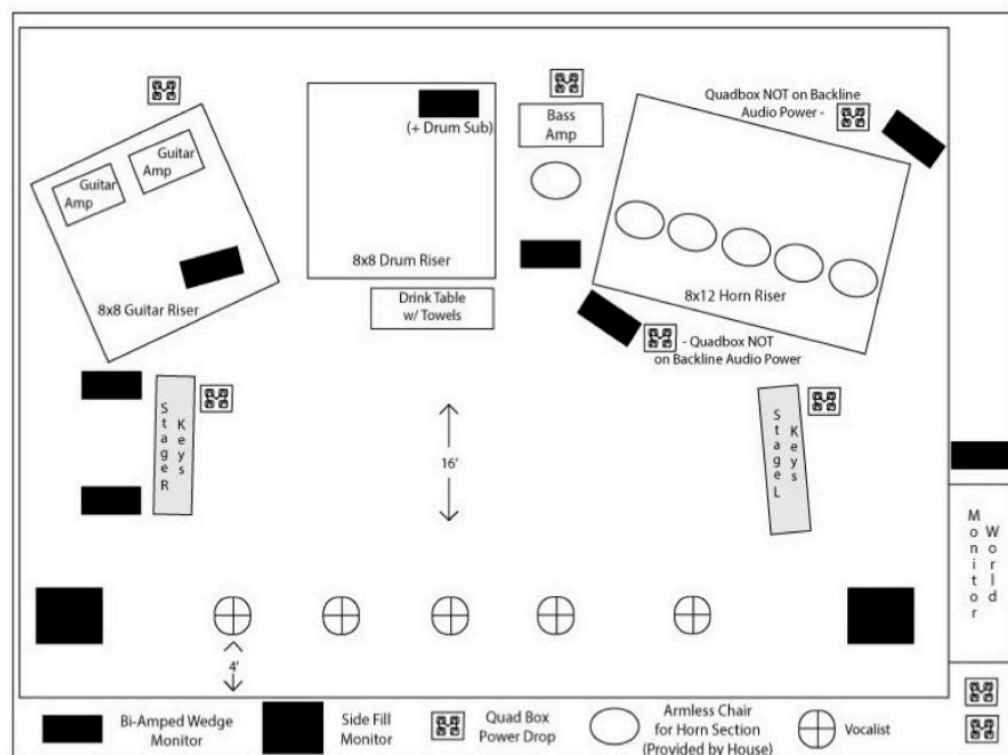
<sup>24</sup> Fakir.

<sup>25</sup> Jackson.



an auxiliary percussionist who plays congas, bongos, and various other percussion instruments. These musicians are all full time employees of the artists and travel to all of the shows. Some of these players have sheet music, but most of them play the show from memory or by ear. A stage plot indicating the location of the various musicians on stage (Figure 2) is shown below.

Figure 2. Temptations Stage Layout



A relatively recent addition to the Four Tops stage show is the presence of pre-recorded background vocal tracks. These tracks, along with supplementary string, percussion, and keyboard parts, are balanced and mixed in a recording studio. An isolated metronome click track is sent to the drummer and the musical director through

headphones or in-ear monitors to align the live performance with the pre-recorded components of the show. These tracks are managed on stage by the musical director and fed to the public address system (heretofore referred to as a PA) by means of an iPad™. A count-off initiating each tune is programmed into the tracks so that the conductor can bring the horn section in on cue.

The sound check is the time for the main sound engineer and the stage monitor engineer to adjust the sound levels and tune the mix to the acoustical space of the performance venue while attempting to meet the sound monitoring needs of the musicians on stage. All of the lines of the microphones and other sound input cables are tested to insure that all connections are properly made. Because this is a very complex setup, unforeseen technical problems must be solved. Figure 3 is a diagram of the PA Input List for a typical show.

Figure 3. Temptations Sound System Input List

THE TEMPTATIONS 2015 INPUT LIST

CH.	Instrument	Inserts	VCA/DCA
1	Kick	Compressor	1 & 7
2	Snare Top	Compressor	1 & 7
3	Snare Bottom		1 & 7
4	Hi Hat		1 & 7
5	Rack 1	Gate	1 & 7
6	Rack 2	Gate	1 & 7
7	Rack 3	Gate	1 & 7
8	Rack 4	Gate	1 & 7
9			
10	Ride		1 & 7
11	OH SL		1 & 7
12	OH SR		1 & 7
13	Bass	Compressor	2 & 7
14	GTR MIC	Compressor	2 & 7
15	GTR L	Compressor	3 & 7
16	GTR R	Compressor	3 & 7
17	Fantom L		4 & 7
18	Fantom R		4 & 7
19	RD700 L		4 & 7
20	RD700 R		4 & 7
21	Kronos L		5 & 7
22	Kronos R		5 & 7
23	Triton L		5 & 7
24	Triton R		5 & 7
25	Otis	Compressor	8
26	Ron	Compressor	8
27	Terry	Compressor	8
28	Bruce	Compressor	8
29	Joe	Compressor	8
30	Billy	Compressor	
31			
32	MC		
33	Tenor		6
34	Alto		6
35	Alto		6
36	Tenor		6
37	Bari		6
38	Pet		6
39	Pet		6
40	Pet		6
41	Bone		6
42	Bone		6
43	Drum Verb L		
44	Drum Verb R		
45	Vox Verb L		
46	Vox Verb R		
47	Vox DBL L		
48	Vox DBL R		
49	Delay L		
50	Delay R		
51	Horn Verb L		
52	Horn Verb R		
53	CD L		
54	CD R		
55	iPod L		
56	iPod R		

Each member of the rhythm section has a personal monitor mix. A wedge-shaped speaker cabinet is placed in close proximity to each player, and the monitor engineer works to meet the demands of each individual. This is a very tedious process, and it is imperative that the horn players be respectful of the engineers' time and refrain from practicing, warming up or "noodling" on their instruments until asked to play.

The horn section gets one monitor mix for the entire 10-piece ensemble. Usually one monitor is placed in front of the saxophones and one behind the brass. The same mix is fed through both cabinets and ideally is intended to provide the ten horn players with a reference for playing with the correct phrasing and intonation matching the rest of the band. Unfortunately, this is of little use to most members of the horn section. Many differences exist among the various instrumentalists as to what should be included in the monitor mix. Also, because the saxophones are seated directly in front of the brass players' bells, many of them use some sort of hearing protection. As a result, the mix is often quite woodwind heavy. Because the horns are each provided with a clip-on microphone, most brass players play into their stands to some degree to obtain an acoustical reflection so that they might hear themselves. One possible solution to this dilemma is that a horn player might bring his own personal in-ear monitoring system, although most players do not own this sort of equipment.

The need for extensive stage monitoring might be lessened if not for the extreme sound levels produced on stage. Stage volume in excess of 100 decibels is common on the Tops' and Tempts' shows. Except for the drummer and percussionist, none of the full-time musicians working with these groups play acoustic instruments.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS AND PERFORMANCE PRACTICE: SHOWTIME

The musical material in the horn section arrangements for the Four Tops and the Temptations contains three basic components. Melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic elements are used to support and enhance the live stage performance. Rarely however are there any instances where only one of these elements is employed. In most instances, all three occur at once, layered among the saxophone, trumpet, and trombone sections.

An integral part of the accompaniment for a singing group is the presence of melody. Many of the musical motifs in the horn section arrangements are extensions of background vocal arrangements and display a distinctly lyrical quality. The members of the horn section must emulate the quality of the lyrics and lines being performed by the vocalists as they echo and complement the singers.

In the Temptations' *Just My Imagination*, Askey's arrangement specifies only for the brass section. The original recording of this tune features an orchestral accompaniment with marimba and French horns that becomes a flugelhorn section scored above the trombones in the live staging of the piece. The lines played in the beginning of the excerpt below (Figure 4) by the unison flugelhorns is a repeated echo of the first three notes of the line, "Truly a dream come true" in the lead vocal. A similar melodic idea occurs beginning on beat four of measure 19 with the lyric, "A cozy little home," this time elongated to a quarter note triplet figure. These repetitious passages provide a lush,

dreamy background that adds depth to the texture of the accompaniment. Beginning on beat three in measure 35 is a final phrase supporting the vocal line, “It was just my imagination,” in the flugelhorns.

Figure 4. *Just My Imagination* Excerpt – The Temptations

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a Flugelhorn (Flghn.) and Trombone (Tbn.) part. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4.

- System 1:** The Flugelhorn part begins with a rest in measure 1, followed by a melodic line starting in measure 2. The Trombone part has rests in measures 1 through 5.
- System 2:** The Flugelhorn part continues its melodic line, with measure 6 marked. The Trombone part has rests in measures 6 through 8, with measure 8 marked.
- System 3:** The Flugelhorn part features triplet markings (3) over measures 20 through 24. The Trombone part has rests in measures 20 through 24.
- System 4:** The Flugelhorn part continues with triplet markings (3) over measures 27 through 30. The Trombone part has rests in measures 27 through 30, with measure 30 marked.
- System 5:** The Flugelhorn part begins in measure 36 with a melodic phrase. The Trombone part has rests in measures 36 through 38, with measure 38 marked.

In any ensemble focus upon intonation and blend is important at all times.

Perhaps nowhere in the Temptations' show is this more important. Not only should the flugelhorns be in tune with each other but also they should be aligned with the featured

vocalist out front and strive for a flowing, seamless presentation of the musical material. Section players must listen carefully to emulate any stylistic nuances in the lead player's performance.

*Just My Imagination* is the fifth song in a medley of six classic Temptations hits and follows some of the most strenuous playing in the entire show for the trumpet section. For this reason, many trumpeters view this segment of the medley as an opportunity to rest and may not play with the same attention to detail as the more athletic preceding pieces. Blend, intonation, and phrasing must be carefully addressed in the performance of this passage.

In the Four Tops', *Baby I Need Your Loving* (Figure 5), the horn section again adds support and depth to the background vocal lines. While the trombones and baritone sax provide harmonic underpinning, the saxophones double the singers' vocalizations. The two-bar phrase is played three times with the trumpets joining the saxes the third time through for increased emphasis. A key point to remember for horn section players is always to support melodic lines with harmonic material, never covering the more important thematic content.

Figure 5. *Baby I Need Your Loving* Excerpt – The Four Tops

The image displays two systems of musical notation for an excerpt from 'Baby I Need Your Loving' by The Four Tops. The first system includes parts for Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Trumpet in B $\flat$ , and Trombone. The second system includes parts for A. Sax., T. Sax., B. Sax., B $\flat$  Tpt., and Tbn. The music is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The saxophone and trumpet parts feature a melodic line with a 'roof top' accent on the first note of each phrase, while the Trombone and Tbn. parts provide a harmonic accompaniment with a similar accent on the first note. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Although the singers use the syllable “oo” to render a very smooth line, the saxophones and trumpets are instructed to play a *marcato* or “roof top” accent on the first note of each phrase. This does not necessarily match the treatment the singers give to this line, but certainly adds more character and energy. In addition to the roof top on the first note of the line, an accent also is indicated on the second note in the phrase. Additional



performance markings place an accent on the and of four and a staccato marking on the last note of the phrase. These accents are important to add musical shaping and a sense of forward motion to the line.

One of the most beautiful ballads in the Four Tops' library is Ivy Jo Hunter and Mickey Stevenson's, *Ask the Lonely*. Levi Stubbs provides an emotionally charged lead vocal line that is referenced in the horn arrangement numerous times (Figure 6).

Figure 6. *Ask The Lonely* Excerpt – The Four Tops

The image displays a musical score for an excerpt from "Ask The Lonely" by The Four Tops. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes staves for Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Trumpet in Bb, and Trombone. The second system includes staves for Alto Sax (labeled "1st Alto Ad lib Solo (No Maj. 7's)"), Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Bb Trumpet, and Trombone. The music is in 4/4 time and Bb major. The Alto Sax part features a melodic line with slurs and accents. The Tenor Sax part provides harmonic support with chords and single notes. The Baritone Sax part plays a rhythmic pattern. The Trumpet in Bb and Trombone parts provide a harmonic foundation with sustained chords and rhythmic patterns. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *ff*.

In bar two of the excerpt, the tenor and alto saxophone sections provide harmonized melodic material. During the first two phrases, the dynamic level should rise and fall with each phrase, reaching its peak on the last note of the phrase and quickly falling back into the texture. When the trumpets join in the sixth bar, this crescendo should go all the way to the downbeat of bar eight. Another crescendo and decrescendo is indicated in the last four bars of the excerpt in the trumpet parts while the saxophones are relegated to providing harmonic support.

When the trumpets join the saxophones in bar six of this passage they must follow the same articulation markings. The quarter note triplets in bar six and seven should be very connected to allow for the contrast of the marcato eighth notes that follow, because these notes are aligned with the drums that set up the end of the phrase. Overall, this piece calls for a very smooth, flowing quality that is occasionally punctuated with rhythmic interjections.

Harmonic elements are presented by the use of sustained chords, commonly referred to as *pads*. In the Temptations', *I'm Losing You* (Figure 7), the entire horn section provides harmonic support in a blocked voicing coupled with a driving rhythm consisting of a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note tied to a half note. The chord progression is C, C<sup>7</sup>, G/C, and back to C<sup>7</sup>.

Common practice calls for the horn players to breathe at the end of each measure in this passage due to the high tessitura and extremely loud dynamic level at this point in the show. A contributing factor in the need for breathing so frequently is the fact that this is the finale of the Temptations' show and fatigue is a major factor for brass players.

Members of the entire horn section must listen carefully to the lead trumpet player in order to match phrasing. This ensures that the section will produce a tight, clean ensemble sound.

Figure 7. *I'm Losing You* Excerpt – The Temptations

The image displays a musical score for the horn section of the song "I'm Losing You" by The Temptations. The score is written for five instruments: Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Trumpet in B♭, and Trombone. The music is in 4/4 time and the key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The Alto Sax part features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together. The Tenor Sax part provides a similar melodic line, sometimes in octaves. The Baritone Sax part plays a more rhythmic, eighth-note pattern. The Trumpet in B♭ and Trombone parts play block chords, with the Trombone part often in octaves. The score consists of four measures, showing the coordination between the different instruments.

One facet of ensemble performance often overlooked is that of note releases. For a section to produce a unified musical concept, the end of notes should be aligned just as carefully as their beginnings. In most instances in the arrangements of the Tops and Tempts, much like big band jazz ensemble playing, players frequently use tongue-stopped releases. Section players should listen carefully to their lead players and strive to match breathing and phrasing. Lead players should strive for consistency. Tight releases of blocked chords will energize the performance adding an important rhythmic component to otherwise bland harmonic material.

As mentioned, the horn section arrangements are generally layered with harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic material. Block chords may employ rhythmic interjections that lie beneath melodic material presented by one or more sub groups of the horn section. In the Four Tops', *Bernadette* (figure 8), a D-flat major triad is sounded by the entire horn section for two beats followed by a rhythmically accented eighth and two sixteenth note figure on the same block chord. This moves to an E-flat minor seventh chord in the brass section while the saxophones overlay the ascending quarter note triplet melody.

Common practice when performing sustained pads is to provide musical shaping through use of dynamic gestures. An accented attack followed by a crescendo provides musical motion and energy, particularly when coupled with solid intonation and tight releases. In these examples, the idea must be exaggerated. In addition to the added energetic feel of the musical shaping, the lessening of the dynamic level after the attack allows for the melodic material layered on top to emerge.

Figure 8. *Bernadette* Excerpt – The Four Tops

The musical score for Figure 8, 'Bernadette' Excerpt – The Four Tops, is written for five instruments: Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Trumpet in Bb, and Trombone. The music is in 4/4 time and Bb major. The Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, and Baritone Sax parts feature melodic lines with triplets and slurs. The Trumpet in Bb and Trombone parts provide harmonic support with sustained chords and slurs.

As mentioned, harmonic material should always support melodic components. For a melodic line to dominate the musical texture, sustained chords should soften dynamically. In the above example, the trumpets and trombones should employ a slight *forte piano* followed by a slight crescendo on the dotted half note in the second bar and on the whole notes in the third bar to allow the melodic material in the saxophone section to emerge. This dynamic shaping also enhances the forward momentum of the musical line.

In the Four Tops', *It's The Same Old Song* (Figure 9), melodic material is presented by the lead alto saxophone atop the rest of the horn section that provides the harmonic progression in a blocked voicing. The driving rhythm of this material provides a sense of motion leading toward the cadence at the end of the four-bar phrase by the entire ensemble.

Figure 9. *It's The Same Old Song* Excerpt – The Four Tops

The image displays a musical score for an excerpt from 'It's The Same Old Song' by The Four Tops. The score is written for five instruments: Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Trumpet in Bb, and Trombone. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The Alto Sax part features a melodic line with eighth notes and a roof top accent on the eighth note of the fourth measure. The Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Trumpet in Bb, and Trombone parts provide harmonic support with various chordal textures and rhythmic patterns. The Trombone part includes a bass line with eighth notes and a roof top accent on the eighth note of the fourth measure.

Unified articulation across the ensemble is crucial when playing this music. Notes with a roof top accent are treated differently in jazz and commercial music than in common, orchestral practice. These accents call for separation with a heavy accent or short, fat notes. Many of the arrangements for the Tops and Tempts, however, are very inconsistent in their use of articulation markings. In Figure 9, the roof top accent on the eighth note on beat three of the fourth measure is marked only in the alto saxophones and trombones. This same marking must be applied in the tenor sax, baritone sax, and trumpet parts as well.

As mentioned, many of the articulation markings in the sheet music used by the horn section for the Tops' and Tempts' shows have been extensively marked, erased, and marked again. Sometimes the markings serve to clarify the intent of the arranger, but this is not always the case. Of utmost importance for any musician playing a show of this

nature is to develop the ability to mimic the vocalized instructions given by the musical director on his or her instrument to match the phrasing, articulation, dynamic contrast, and overall spirit of these arrangements.

Many challenging rhythmic motifs are contained in the horn section arrangements of the Tops and Temps. All players in the sections must agree upon the articulations and phrasing of these passages, especially given the inconsistent markings on the parts, both printed and noted in pencil. Short, separated notes should be consistent throughout the sections so that the rhythmic ideas clearly emerge while notes with no marking may be longer or more *legato*. Most likely any questionable articulation will be discussed in rehearsal. The musical director usually sings passages with vague markings, relying upon individual players to mark their parts accordingly.

Perhaps no rhythmic passage in the Temptations' show is more recognizable than the opening statement for the hit song, *Get Ready* (Figure 10). A quick, two beat drum fill sets up the powerful full ensemble introduction of the tune. Strong, accented entrances, dynamic shaping, tongue-stopped releases, and strictly aligned ensemble playing all are needed to provide excitement and energy feeding into the vocal entrance that follows.

Figure 10. *Get Ready* Excerpt – The Temptations

The *sforzando* in the first measure of the excerpt should be accented heavily then immediately softened dynamically. A quick crescendo leading to a strong, tongue-stopped release should follow. The same should apply in the second and third measures. One articulation marking is not indicated on the horn parts. In the third bar, the quarter note on beat four should have a *marcato* accent that serves as the release for that figure.

In the Four Tops', *Keeper of The Castle* (Figure 11), a strong, rhythmic passage is sounded by the entire band. Not only is it important for the horn section to present a unified articulation concept, but also the horns and the rhythm section must be rhythmically aligned, since a snare drum hit and cymbal crash occur on each eighth note rest between the shorter motifs. In these types of passages, no space should be allowed between longer notes and short notes. Longer or more legato notes should feed directly into the *marcato* notes, which serve as punctuation marks for the articulated line, particularly at the end of bars two and four.



Figure 11. *Keeper of The Castle* Excerpt – The Four Tops

The musical score is written for five instruments: Alto Sax, Tenor Sax, Baritone Sax, Trumpet in B $\flat$ , and Trombone. The key signature has two flats (B $\flat$  and E $\flat$ ), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains two measures. The second system also contains two measures. In the second system, the first measure of the Alto Sax staff is marked with a '3' above it, indicating a triplet. Similarly, the first measure of the Trombone staff in the second system is marked with a '3' above it, also indicating a triplet. The notation includes various articulation markings such as slurs, accents, and slurs with accents.

Again, inconsistencies exist in the articulation markings for this excerpt. In the first measure, the first sixteenth note of the bar is slurred to the eighth that follows. This should also be the case for the next sixteenth to eighth. This may seem to be an insignificant item, but the consistency of the pattern should carry through the entire

passage. The same articulation should be applied each time it occurs, even in bars two and four, when the pattern is followed by two staccato sixteenths instead of an eighth rest.

Figure 12. *Treat Her Like A Lady* Excerpt – The Temptations

The musical score for Figure 12 is arranged in two systems, each containing five staves for different instruments. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4.

**System 1 (Measures 1-4):**

- Alto Sax:** Measures 1-4. Notes: F#4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).
- Tenor Sax:** Measures 1-4. Notes: F#4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).
- Baritone Sax:** Measures 1-4. Notes: F#4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).
- Trumpet in Bb:** Measures 1-4. Notes: F#4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).
- Trombone:** Measures 1-4. Notes: F#4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).

**System 2 (Measures 5-8):**

- A. Sx.:** Measures 5-8. Notes: F#4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).
- T. Sx.:** Measures 5-8. Notes: F#4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).
- B. Sx.:** Measures 5-8. Notes: F#4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).
- Bb Tpt.:** Measures 5-8. Notes: F#4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).
- Tbn.:** Measures 5-8. Notes: F#4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G#4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half).

In the Temptations', *Treat Her Like A Lady* (Figure 12), a complex rhythmic figure is presented. The entire horn section sounds the rhythm in the first bar. The notes with a *marcato* marking must align accurately throughout the ensemble in order to produce the desired impact. As in earlier examples, dynamic shaping and tight releases are required in the brass sections.

The saxophone section interjects additional rhythmic material with an ascending, scale-wise passage in the second bar and a short burst of four repeated sixteenth notes in the third. The additional material in the saxophone section requires special treatment as well. The ascending sixteenth note passage in the second bar should employ a gradual crescendo leading to a tight, tongue-stopped release at the peak of the line. This same idea should be applied to the repeated sixteenth notes in the third bar, loudening and driving towards the final note in the line.

A hierarchy in the horn section exists for a show such as this. The lead trumpeter is responsible for setting the style, phrasing, and intonation of the horn section. The lead trombonist and lead alto saxophonist lead their sections as well, but should strive to follow the lead trumpet. Of course, in rehearsal the musical director will indicate the phrasing that he expects, but the section leaders must translate these instructions into musical language that can be disseminated to their section mates to insure all players share a unified musical concept. Scott Adair added:

During rehearsal it is very important for each section to agree on dynamics, articulations, phrasing, etc. Marking the parts in pencil (not ink) is always

advisable and the section leader needs to make sure the other players understand what needs to be done.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Adair.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION, SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH: WRAPPING IT ALL UP

The Four Tops and the Temptations continue to delight audiences worldwide after more than a half century in show business. Trumpeters, trombonists and saxophonists across the United States are called upon to back up these legendary performers on a part-time basis. The motivic materials from the original horn arrangements of Gil Askey remain in use, surviving many revisions over the years. As a result of these adaptations, many of the articulation and phrasing markings contained in the horn section parts are inaccurate. Due to these shortcomings, performances may be inconsistent from show to show. There is inadequate rehearsal time for the musical directors to address all of the intricacies of the arrangements. Often phrasing decisions are left to the discretion of the individuals in the section.

Simple concepts for treating melodic, harmonic and rhythmic elements in the horn arrangements should be followed. Melodic content should closely follow the phrasing and musical shaping of the vocal parts that are being supported. Harmonic elements should support melodic content while rhythmic components should provide energy and punctuation. Alignment with the rhythm section in terms of style, intonation, phrasing and articulation is of the utmost importance. Attention to the hierarchy of the horn section is also crucial.

The Four Tops and the Temptations are not the only touring artists in popular music today that employ a live horn section and many of the same performance practices are applicable. The O'Jays, Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, Aretha Franklin and others also hire freelance horn sections for their concert appearances and have unique performance issues related to their shows. Additional research into the arrangements and performance practices of these acts and others is called for. Further studies on sound monitoring for wind instrumentalists, both through conventional floor wedges (speakers) and in-ear monitor systems, would also be beneficial.

A musician that is called upon to play for a Tops and Tempts show must consider much more than the music that he or she will be performing. The time commitment includes travel and possible overnight accommodations. The extreme stage volume can lead to hearing loss in later years. The stamina needed to play the shows, the rehearsals and the sound checks demands great physical conditioning. These aspects, coupled with the unclear and confusing markings on the individual parts, are all considerations that the players must address.

A musician engaged to play a TNT show must understand that simply reading the page does not adequately convey the sum of the content. Therefore, it is incumbent on the performer to possess an awareness of the performance practice of this music. In the words of Gil Askey, "it's got to have some duck butter on it." A seasoned musician in this field of show business would equate this idea with having "soul". The aural tradition of this music can not simply be conveyed by the printed page. While soul, character, or groove

are abstract colloquialisms, it is the hope of this author that this project can provide some empiricism with regards to the performance of this music

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## APPENDIX A

### MY HISTORY WITH THE TOPS AND TEMPTS

In the Summer of 1992 I had just relocated from Nashville, Tennessee back home to North Carolina following a National tour with a Broadway musical. Since I hoped to begin freelancing in the area a friend suggested that I contact Charlotte trumpeter Ray Alexander, a former Las Vegas musician turned musical contractor. He put me to work right away, sending me to play second trumpet for him on the Four Tops and the Temptations show in Richmond, Virginia.

Early on a Saturday morning I climbed into the passenger seat of a minivan in Greensboro, North Carolina occupied by two local saxophonists and we set out for the gig. We met up with the rest of the horn section (mostly Charlotte musicians) at an outdoor amphitheater and set up quickly to rehearse the shows.

We rehearsed first with George Rountree of the Four Tops then with Bob Farrell of the Temptations. I remember playing quickly through nearly all of the music for both acts with the musical directors loudly keeping time with a cowbell. The show itself was a blur and I'm sure I made more than my fair share of mistakes. Evidently, I did a better job than I originally thought as Ray continued to hire me to play in his section any time he put together the horns for the Tops or Tempts for the next five years.

The Ray Alexander Orchestra soon became one of the preferred horn sections for the Four Tops. We began playing strings of shows traveling extensively throughout the

eastern half of the United States with the Tops, Tempts, the Spinners, Franki Valli and the Four Seasons, Martha and the Vandellas, and others. Conditions were far less than glamorous but all of the hard work was about to pay off.

In the mid 1990's we began appearing in the showrooms of Las Vegas. A typical run would last for two weeks and we did three or four trips each year. The horn section would stay at the Blair House Suites, a little place a block or so off of the Strip, and the Tops' road manager Fred Bridges would pick us up each night to deliver us to the gig. Fred has a very warm personality and always made us feel like family. We became very close with the rhythm section members and musical director George Rountree as well. Saturday nights a meal of catfish, ribs and collard greens served buffet style in the stars' dressing room where everyone from the production would gather, including the Tops. It was a glorious time.

I will never forget my first trip to Vegas. We were playing the showroom at Bally's Casino and were approaching the end of the run. Towards the end of the show I felt something brush against the inside of my right calf and looked down to see a hand reach over to grab my flugelhorn. I didn't dare stop playing, as we were in the midst of a long medley. Soon I heard Levi Stubbs say on the microphone, "Oh look, it's Gil!" Out of the stage left wing an older gentleman shuffled out on stage playing my horn. He improvised into one of the other Tops' microphone for the remainder of the show. After the curtain came down I asked my boss who that guy is that took my horn. "Oh, that's Gil Askey," I was told. I had no idea who that was but I thought I'd better go and introduce

myself and retrieve my instrument. When I approached him all he had to say was, “that mouthpiece is a piece of shit!”

The MGM Grand Casino was built in 1993 and soon the Tops’ show moved to its Hollywood Theater. In 1995, coinciding with the release of their first Motown recording *Breaking Through*, Askey was hired to arrange about a dozen tunes from the Great American Songbook for the show and the Tops brought him to Vegas to rehearse the band for two weeks. Every day we would assemble onstage while Gil barked commands and instructions. He was very demanding, cantankerous, and a joy to work for.

There were many career highlights for me during the 1990’s with the Ray Alexander Orchestra and the Four Tops. We recorded the horn section parts for the Motown release *Christmas Here With You*, were featured on the Four Tops’ 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary television special, performed in Bermuda for various corporate events, and toured England and Wales with the *Motown Christmas Spectacular* with the Tops, Tempts and Mary Wilson, one of the original members of the Supremes. Each year we would do a tour of Florida in the Winter, traveling down the east coast and back up the west coast playing all sorts of wonderful venues.

In the Fall of 1997 I was offered a full-time position as trumpeter for the Louise Mandrell Theater in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. It was a difficult decision to leave the horn section but the promise of steady work convinced me to take the job, which I stayed with for nearly nine years. Fortunately, I was still able to play with the Tops and Tempts from time to time. The theater was closed January through March so I was able to return to my freelance career temporarily each year.

In the Winter of 2000 Louise Mandrell had booked our show into the Nugget Casino in Sparks, Nevada. As luck would have it, the Tops were booked in Vegas for two weeks just prior to Louise's gig. I called Ray Alexander and he hired me for the Vegas shows as well as a run-out job to Los Angeles to play for the television show *Motown Live* with the Four Tops, Gerald Levert and Anastacia.

After the Louise Mandrell Theater closed at the end of 2005 I returned again to North Carolina. After reestablishing myself as a freelancer again in the region I again contacted Ray Alexander in search of work. The business was changing, however, and he was no longer taking a full section of players to Las Vegas. Instead, he began taking only two or three of his horn players from the Carolinas and would hire local musicians in Vegas to fill out his section. In addition, the longer strings of shows on the East Coast were dwindling and eventually Ray stopped booking the horns for the Tops and Tempts.

In his place saxophonist Scott Adair formed the Carolina Horns and began contracting horn sections for shows. Adair has been a close friend and colleague for decades. We met on my very first TNT gig when he climbed in the back seat of the van that carried us to Richmond. I had only been a section player for Ray Alexander but now I was being asked to play lead trumpet with both the Tops and the Tempts for the first time. In fact, I played lead for the Temptations for the first time at Biltmore House and Gardens in Asheville, North Carolina then traveled to northern Virginia to play lead with an orchestra the next day. Bob Farrell asked me to teach the brass section their parts to *Treat Her Like A Lady* just prior to the show as it was a last minute addition to the set list that night.

In my time working with the Four Tops and the Temptations I have seen a lot of changes in the lineups of both groups. When I began, all four of the original Tops were still performing. My first show with the Temptations was the only time I was fortunate enough to work with the incomparable bass vocalist Melvin Franklin. The Four Tops' musical director George Rountree became a dear friend, listening to live music in Las Vegas after hours and even riding along with me and Scott Adair one night after the show as we drove from Fort Lauderdale to Coco Beach, Florida. Similarly, Bob Farrell did the same thing on the west coast of Florida one night.

In the Summer of 2015 the Graduate School of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro generously provided me with a research assistantship to help fund my project. I traveled to Detroit and interviewed Duke Fakir of the Four Tops, their musical director Turhan Van Dyke, and the Temptations' musical director Mckinley Jackson. I also toured the Motown Museum at 2648 West Grand Boulevard, original home of Motown Records.

When I first played the TNT show I never expected it to become such a meaningful part of my career. In addition, I now realize that this music places unique demands on a horn section performer. Though there are several similarities to the performance practice of big band jazz or Broadway pit orchestra music, there are aspects of this genre that are quite different. After several hundred, if not thousands of performances I feel as though I still learn something new each time I take the stage with these artists.